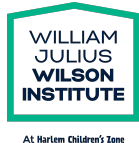


Keynote Address: Why Do Neighborhoods Matter?

Rob Watson

Executive Director, EdRedesign;
Lecturer on Education,
Harvard Graduate School of Education



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Neighborhoods as the Unit of Change

Close your eyes and go back to the neighborhood you grew up in...

- Try and identify a moment **when your neighborhood was at its best**, leveraging its assets to transform the lives of its young people and families. Why?
- Try and identify a **moment where your neighborhood failed to live up its promise**, creating barriers to opportunity for young people and families. Why?



The Northside of the City of Poughkeepsie, New York



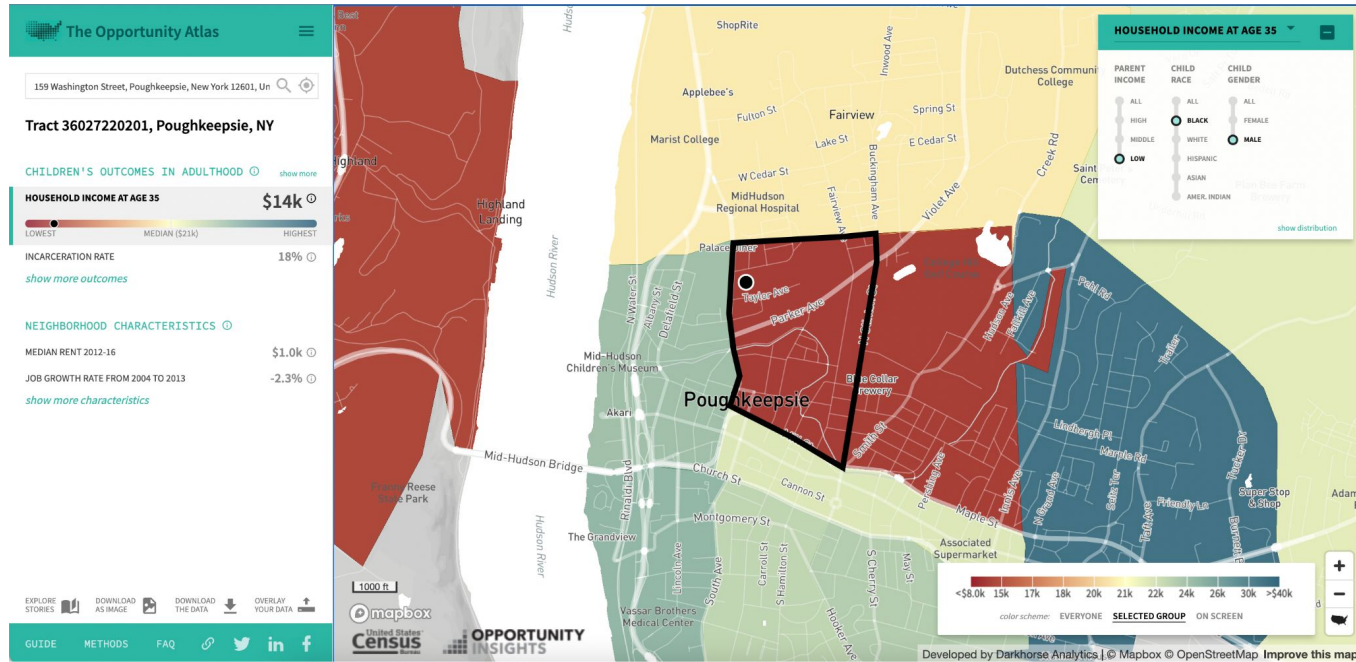
At Harlem Children's Zone

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The Tragedy of Place



At Harlem Children's Zone

Source: The Opportunity Atlas

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Neighborhoods as the Unit of Change

“The neighborhood is arguably the most significant unit by which we organize our society. It determines how safe we are, the quality of the schools our kids go to, what resources we have access to daily, the kinds of job opportunities we have, our psychological well-being and even, as we have seen, how long we live.”

-Seth Kaplan, *Fragile Neighborhoods*



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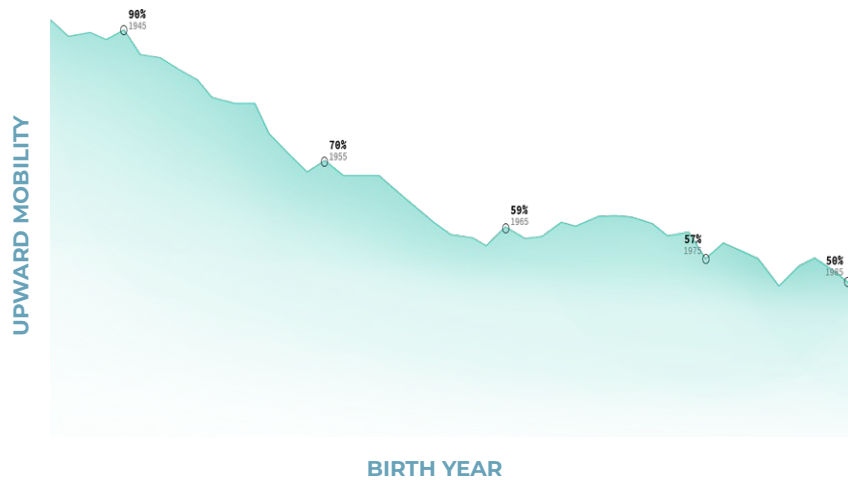


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Race, place, and income should no longer be determinants of school and life outcomes for children and youth

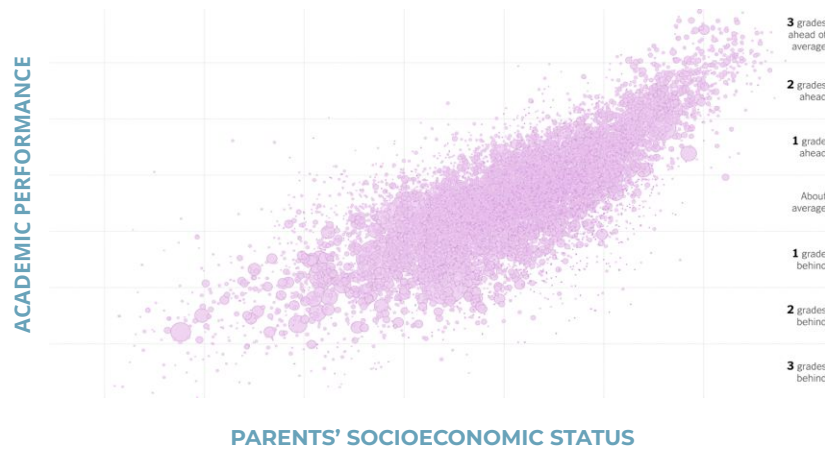
Declining intergenerational mobility

Rates of absolute mobility have declined sharply. 90% of children born in the 1940s earned more than their parents; this was true for only 50% of children born in the 1980s.¹



Inequitable opportunity

Children's outcomes in adulthood are determined more by their socioeconomic status, zip code, and race than by the quality of their schools. Students from the lowest income families may be up to six grade levels behind their peers from the highest income families.²



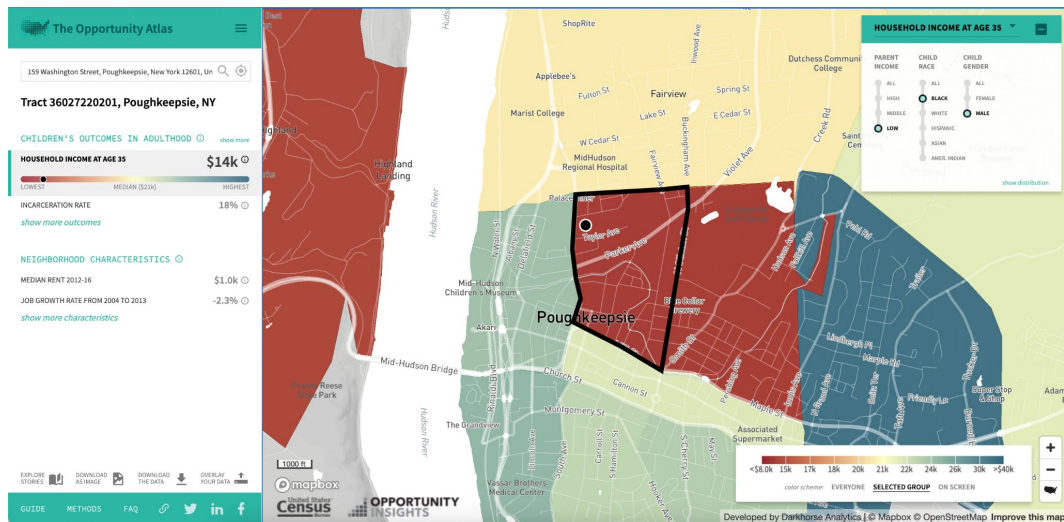
1. Chetty et al. (2017); chart from Opportunity Insights
2. Reardon (2016)

To solve the problem, we need a hyperlocal approach that targets the neighborhoods where disadvantage lives most

“POVERTY RATES THAT ARE MORE THAN ABOUT HALF A MILE AWAY FROM YOUR HOUSE ARE ESSENTIALLY COMPLETELY IRRELEVANT IN PREDICTING YOUR OWN OUTCOMES”

“WE DON’T NEED TO LOOK AT A DIFFERENT COUNTRY OR A DIFFERENT TIME PERIOD TO FIGURE OUT HOW WE WOULD GET TO A SITUATION WITH HIGHER UPWARD MOBILITY... OFTEN, WE CAN JUST LOOK A MILE DOWN THE STREET, OR A COUPLE MILES DOWN THE STREET”

-RAJ CHETTY



At Harlem Children's Zone

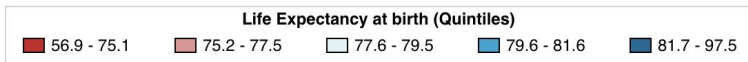
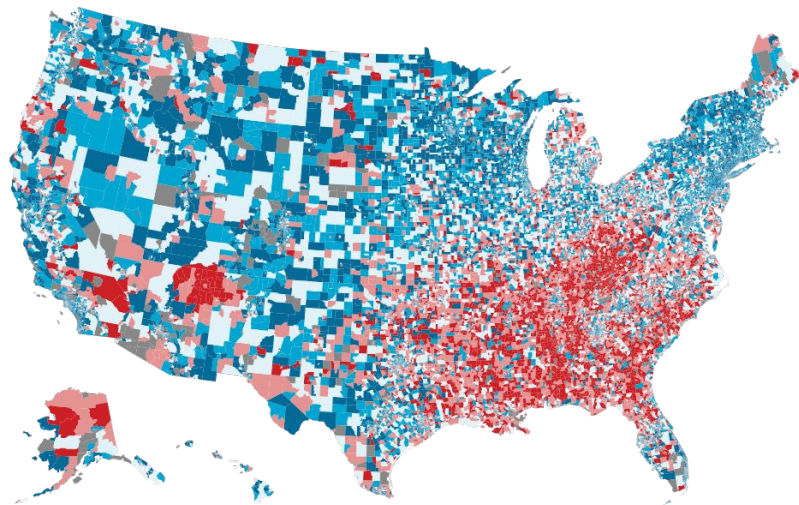
Source: Aspen Institute, "How do Rich Neighborhoods Exist So Close to Poor Ones," June 26, 2019

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Neighborhoods and Life Expectancy



“Life expectancy across US Census tracts ranges more than 40 years, from 56 years to 97 years.”

Source: Shanahan KH, Subramanian SV, Burdick KJ, Monuteaux MC, Lee LK, Fleegler EW. *Association of Neighborhood Conditions and Resources for Children With Life Expectancy at Birth in the US*

Map Source: US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)



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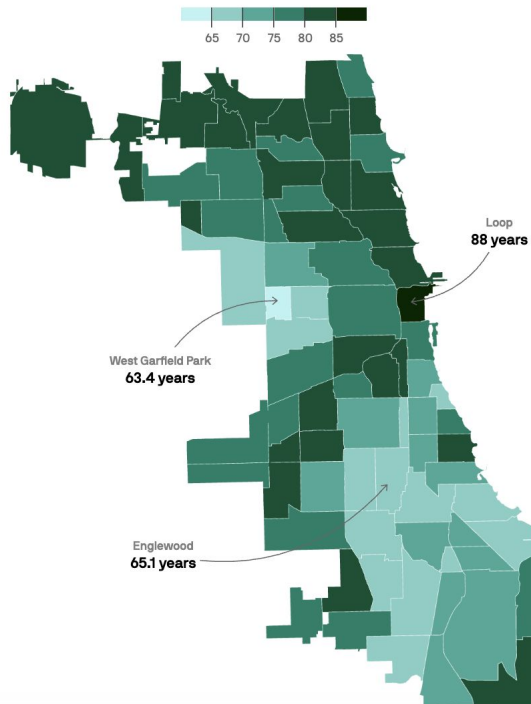
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Neighborhoods and Life Expectancy

Average life expectancy in Chicago neighborhoods, 2022



Data: [Chicago Health Atlas](#); Map: Kavya Beheraj/Axios



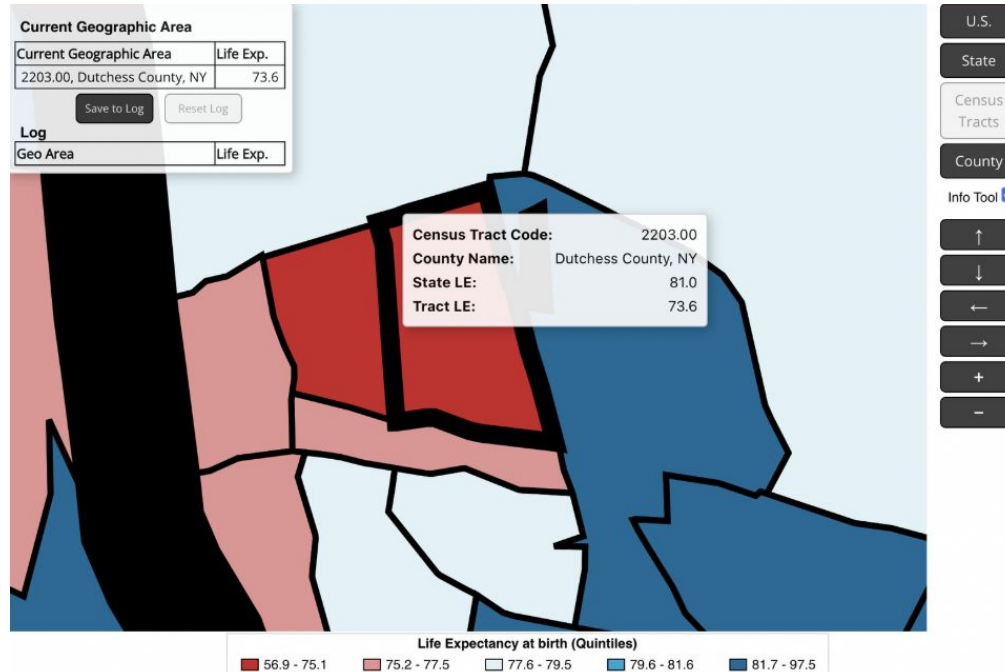
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Life Expectancy in Poughkeepsie's Northside



Source: US Center for Disease Control (CDC)



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“When it comes to health, your zip code matters more than your genetic code.”

- Dr. Anthony Iton



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Framing Social Determinants



K-12 Education

80% of a young person's waking hours between Kindergarten and 12th grade are spent outside of school



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Health

80% of what impacts life expectancy happens outside of the healthcare system

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Social Determinants of Health



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Relationships Matter: young people and families living in disadvantaged neighborhoods often have limited access to the social capital they need to succeed in school and life

“It turns out that the degree of cross-class interaction is the single strongest predictor of economic mobility that anyone has identified to date.”

-Raj Chetty



Source: Opportunity Insights



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Neighborhoods are the epicenter for the greatest social innovations of our time



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Neighborhood cradle-to-career efforts are reimagining the power of place

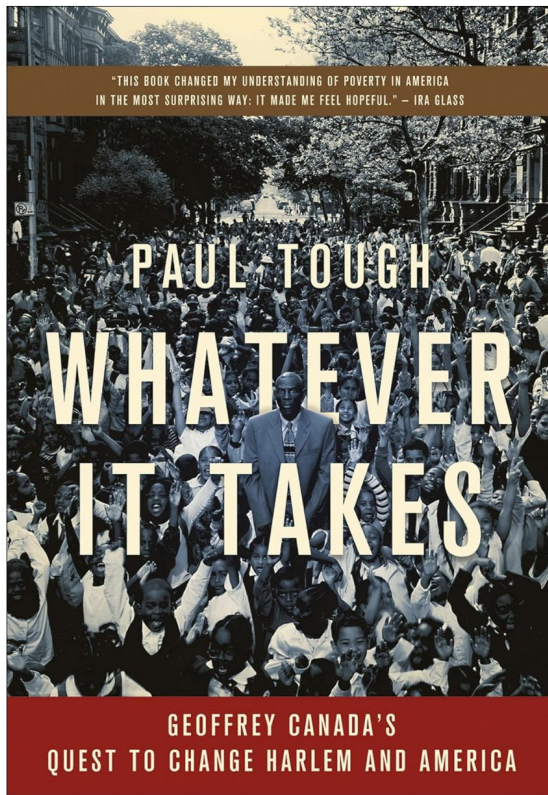


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The New York Times

A Plan to Help Harlem Students Build Wealth: Start Them Off With \$10,000

The Harlem Children's Zone is investing millions of dollars to create savings plans for students in its charter schools and, eventually, nationwide.

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From Harlem to Cincinnati, East Lake to Berea, places have shaped a national movement tackling intergenerational poverty and advancing economic mobility



At Harlem Children's Zone

The Harlem Project

Share full article

By Paul Tough
June 20, 2004

Back in 1990, Geoffrey Canada was just your average do-gooder. That year, he became the president of a nonprofit charitable organization based in Harlem called the Rheedlen Centers for Children and Families, and he set out trying to improve the world, one poor child at a time. It was a bad moment to be poor in New York City. Harlem, especially, was suffering under the simultaneous plagues of crack cocaine, cheap guns and rampant homelessness, and Canada's main goal at Rheedlen, in those years, was to keep the children in his programs alive. The organization had an annual budget of \$3 million, which it spent on a predictable array of services in Upper Manhattan: after-school programs, truancy prevention, anti-violence training for teenagers. The programs seemed to do a lot of good for the children who were



Miracle at East Lake

A Really Good Thing Happening in America

A strategy for community problems-solving does an extraordinary job at restoring our social fabric.

By A. J. G. 2014



Renee Hardy, a third-grade teacher at Mary M. Wright Elementary School, working with students in Springfield, Ill. (The Chicago reporting team photo)

Share article



Dr. David Brundage
Renee Hardy

SPRING 2015

Partners for Education: Rooted in Berea's History of Going Out to Serve

APRIL 14, 2015 • DREAMA GENTRY '05 • 14 MINUTE READ

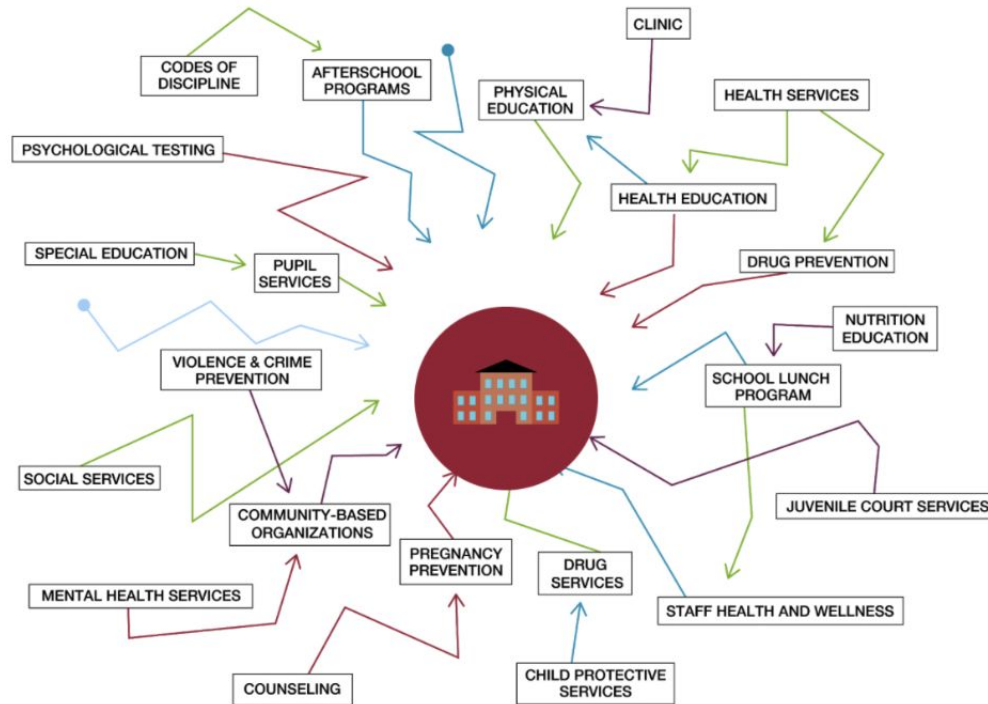


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Disrupting the devastating effects of silos and fragmentation



Source: City Connects



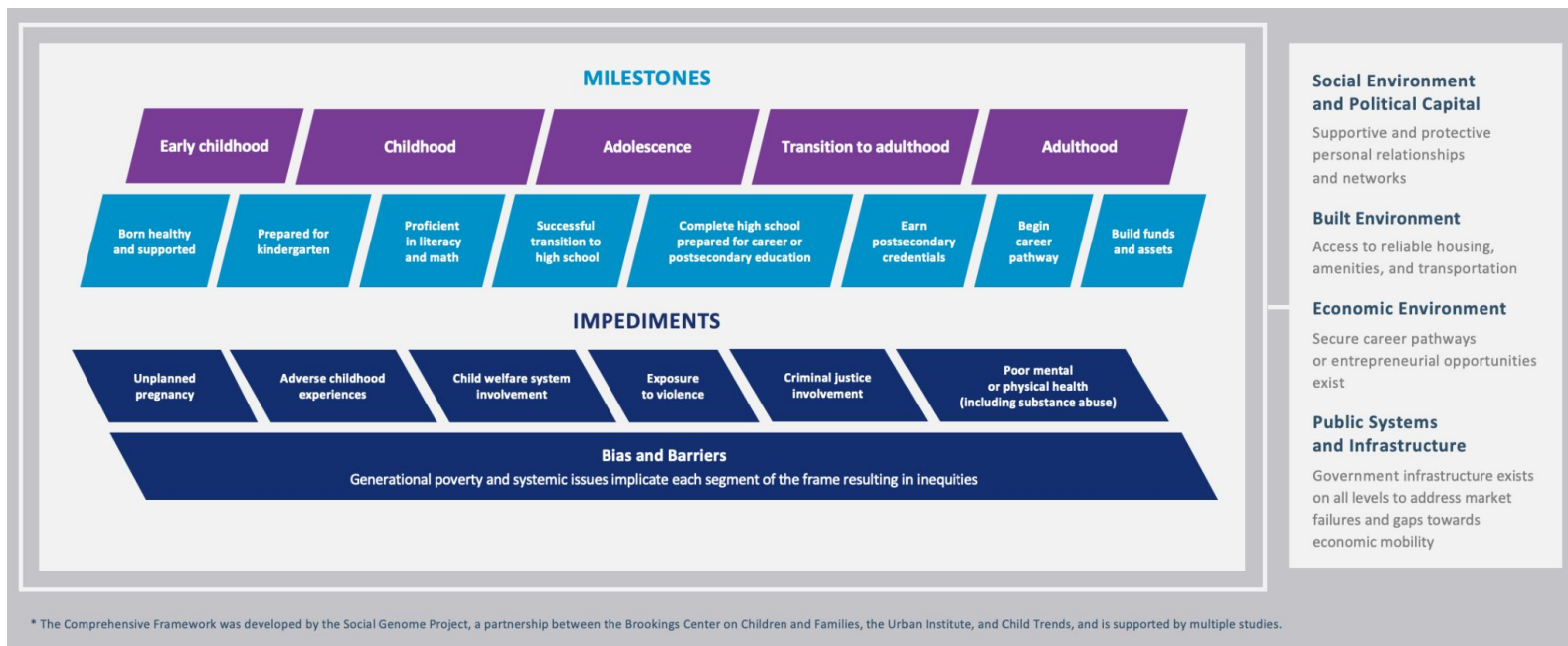
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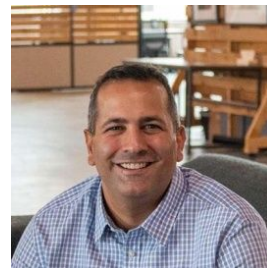
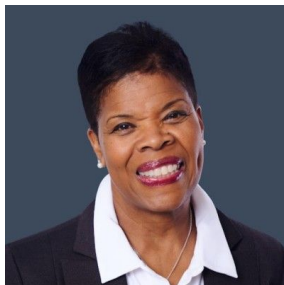
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Towards a Comprehensive Cradle-to-Career Approach



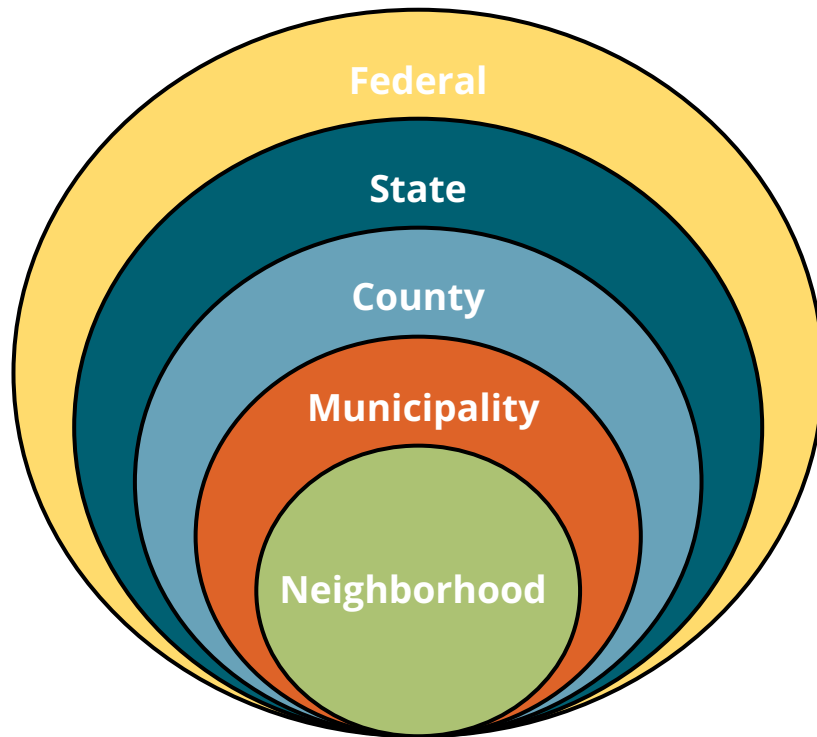


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Communities are layering strategies across multiple units of change to transform neighborhoods



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Communities have informed the creation of a generation of public policies that are creating enabling conditions for cradle-to-career



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Federal Programs



Full-Service Community Schools Program (FSCS)



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States are taking the mantle



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Local government is the next frontier

Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf Announces \$50M Fund to End Generational Poverty

A generation of low-income Oaklanders will receive college savings accounts at birth and scholarships when pursuing higher education



Tulsa Unites Around Youth: Mayor Nichols Launches Children's Cabinet



Promise City Initiative Launched, Joint Effort by City, SFUSD and Community Organizations
Investing in neighborhood-based partnerships to address the needs of families and improve student learning outcomes



"Every Child and Family is Known":

An Initiative to Transform Support for Children and Families in New York City's Shelters



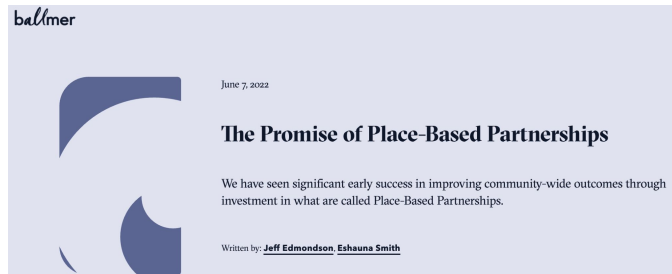
The City of Orlando Expands Kidz Zones into Three Local Neighborhoods



New approaches to philanthropy are accelerating neighborhood transformation

Places

Blue Meridian's Place Matters portfolio invests in place-based partnerships to support community-driven, outcomes-focused approaches that boost economic mobility in communities across the US.



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Harvard can play a catalytic role in amplifying the impact and reach of our field across US higher education



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We're partnering with some of the nation's leading practitioners to position and validate this work with new audiences and spheres of influences

By All Means Senior Fellows

Facilitates collaboration between EdRedesign, Harvard, and exemplary senior leaders of place-based collaborative action.

Our 2023-2025 inaugural cohort



Dr. Russell Booker

CEO, Spartanburg Academic Movement



Alan Cohen

Founder & CEO, Child Poverty Action Lab



Sonali Nijhawan

Immediate Past Director, AmeriCorps State and National



Libby Schaaf

50th Mayor of Oakland, California (2015–2023)



Richard Raya

CEO, Marin Promise Partnership

Our 2025-2027 cohort



Dreama Gentry

President and CEO, Partners for Rural Impact



Elson Nash

Senior Fellow, Blue Meridian Partners;
Partnerships Lead Consultant, Education Commission of the States



Christian Rhodes

Deputy Executive Director, William Julius Wilson Institute at Harlem Children's Zone



Rey Saldaña

President and CEO, Communities In Schools National Office



Sondra Samuels

President and CEO, Northside Achievement Zone

An Emergent Field Whose Time Has Come



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Inspiration: The Field of Public Health

The Harvard Gazette

Findings | Campus & Community | Health | Science & Tech | Nation & World | Arts & Culture | Work & Economy | Menu

LAW SCHOOL DEAN | INTERMITTENT FASTING | INDOOR HEAT | HARVARD READS | EVENTS

NEWS+

The birth of public health education

Contact: Todd Datz | tdatz@hsph.harvard.edu | 617-432-8413 | <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu>

March 20, 2015 • 1 min read

The modern era of public health education is generally credited to a May 27, 1915 report by William Welch and Wickliffe Rose, commonly known as the “Welch-Rose report.” But a **March 6, 1915 article** in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA) by **Milton Rosenau**, who at the time was the first director of the Harvard-Massachusetts Institute of Technology School for Health Officers—precursor to Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health—was a crucial, and earlier, founding document of the era that led to the creation of schools of public health in the United States and around the world.

Rosenau’s contribution to public health education’s beginnings is outlined in a March 17, 2015 *JAMA* **article** by the Harvard Chan School’s **David Hunter**, dean for academic affairs, and Dean Julio Frenk. Their article accompanies Rosenau’s March 1915 article, parts of which are reprinted in the issue.

“The Rosenau piece also provides a fascinating glimpse into the mind of one of our founders at a time when the Harvard-MIT School for Health Officers was pioneering public health education in North America,” said Hunter.



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Summer Institute



Blending the best of research,
practice, and policy to shape a
new discipline



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Summer Institute has played a critical role in shaping the trajectory of my hometown and its Northside neighborhood

The Harvard Gazette Findings Campus & Community Health Science & Tech Nation & World Arts & Culture Work & Economy More

EdRedesign and Harlem Children's Zone visit Poughkeepsie, learn about cradle-to-career efforts



HUDSON VALLEY // NEWS

Poughkeepsie gets \$2.5M federal grant for Community Schools initiative

City Secures \$500,000 HUD Planning Grant



LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR PAYS VISIT TO PCSD



LOCAL

'Now we have a future' Poughkeepsie youth, family services expand with AmeriCorps funding

Saba Ali

Poughkeepsie Journal

Published 5:05 a.m. ET June 19, 2023

Facebook Twitter Email

Iybur Rashad dropped out of Poughkeepsie High School when she was in 11th grade and didn't plan on attending college. Rashad first heard about Youthful Directions II, a youth service organization, from her grandmother. The organization, through its partnership with Youthful Directions AmeriCorps and Dutchess Community College, offers teenagers the opportunity to earn their high school equivalency diploma, build skills in construction while collecting a paycheck and putting in 400 service hours. Rashad will be graduating this year and is planning to attend Dutchess Community College to study criminal justice.



Saba Ali is the state and national director of Youthful Directions, a national network of the National Directions Youthful program in a town in the City of Poughkeepsie on June 19, 2023. Photo: Poughkeepsie Journal

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SPOTLIGHT

"We Get to Make the Future What We Want It to Be":

The Poughkeepsie, NY Children's Cabinet

BY MICHELLE SEDACA

APRIL 2025

In the spring of 2024, 21 teen leaders sat in a circle in an art studio in Poughkeepsie, New York and candidly shared the opportunities and barriers they experienced as young people navigating daily life in their city. A staff member of an initiative called the Poughkeepsie Board of Artistic Youth (PK B.A.Y.) facilitated the lively discussion, which was part of a brainstorming session for a public art project.

Poughkeepsie Children's Cabinet

Some named coaches and teachers who have acted as mentors, and others talked about their families, friends,

York City. At the same time, the city is facing many of the same systemic challenges as larger urban areas,

Poughkeepsie Children's Cabinet presents...
PUTTING KIDS FIRST
UNLOCKING THE PROMISE OF POUGHKEEPSIE

Wednesday
April 9, 2025

GEOFFREY CANADA
PRESIDENT AND FOUNDER, HARLEM CHILDREN'S ZONE

Doors Open 5:30 | Event Begins 6:15 PM
SOJOURNER TRUTH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
(Formerly Morse Elementary School)
101 Mansion St, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

Flowers Joins Mayors' Neighborhood Academy

Mar 19, 2025



From left are Harlem Children's Zone President and Founder Geoffrey Canada, Geoffrey Canada, Youth Services Director Karen Williams, Mayor Flowers and Harlem Children's Zone Chief Executive Officer Kwame Owusu-Kesse.

POUGHKEEPSIE - Mayor Yvonne Flowers was one of 12 elected and city leaders, representing over 3.1 million residents and over 680,000 youth, who attended the Mayors' Neighborhood Academy: One Million Points of Opportunity, a two-day convening hosted by William Julius Wilson Institute (WJWI) at Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ) and the National League of Cities (NLC).

Held at HCZ - a nationally acclaimed anti-poverty organization based in New York City -



Your community's next great leap forward begins today



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For every public problem we're facing in our communities, there's **a place in this room** that's a little further along in solving it



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Make a commitment this week to **study each other's moves** and apply those learnings to the place you call home



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The time has come to be **morally ambitious**

Together, **let's build this field,**
one **neighborhood** at a time



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